

BOOK REVIEWS

A COURSE IN PRACTICAL THERAPEUTICS. By Martin Emil Refhuss, M.D., F.A.C.P. Professor of Clinical Medicine and Sutherland M. Prevost, Lecturer in Therapeutics, The Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia; F. Kenneth Albrecht, M.D., formerly Clinical Director U. S. Marine Hospital, Baltimore, Md.; and Alison Howe Price, A.B., M.D., Asst. Professor of Medicine, The Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, Md., 1948. \$15.00.

Every honest reviewer has to admit at times that his first impression of a book turns out to be entirely wrong—an experience which may convert him into an enthusiastic supporter of a work at first glance condemned. Such was the case with this reviewer's opinion of *Practical Therapeutics*. He was taken aback by the large size. The bulkiness appeared unnecessary for a book entitled "practical." However, this objection was overbalanced by the large print and easy readability. As he continued to investigate the body of the book his opinion became progressively more favorable until he now feels that he can recommend it enthusiastically.

Practical Therapeutics is a summary of the course in therapeutics at the Jefferson Medical College. The information has been gathered by the students year by year as part of their assignments in this course. These contributions have been reviewed and revised by the various members of the faculty teaching in the course and finally have been incorporated in this book. It is divided into four sections. The first is on general therapeutic principles. It includes the plan of a program for therapy for the individual patient, involving the physical and emotional aspects of the disease and of the patient. It has a chapter on prescription writing as well as other chapters on practical pharmacuetics and dietary principles. The second section is devoted to a discussion of symptoms and their management. The third and largest section takes up the individual therapy of various disease conditions. A brief etiological and diagnostic survey of each condition is given before treatment per se is discussed. The fourth section deals with various special subjects which the authors state should be of interest to the practitioner of general medicine but which seem to reflect the primary undergraduate teaching interest of the contributors.

The treatment of each symptom, condition, or disease is set forth in outlined form. Pharmaceutical prescriptions are given in detail, both U.S.P. preparations and proprietary remedies. The therapy is brought entirely up to the date of publication—summer of 1948. Particular mention should be made of the excellent illustrative diagrams by Wm. Toeche. These are often more helpful than several pages of text.

The book is excellent to use as a reference in a doctor's office and will probably be one of the most frequently consulted of any volume in his armamentarium. Whatever disagreement one may have with the individual opinions of the thirteen authors, one must conclude that the entire book is clear and logically planned and outlined. The inclusion and the occasional emphasis on proprietary drugs when U.S.P. preparations are available is of debatable merit but perhaps may be defended as part of current medical drug therapy (which is all too much guided by the sales representatives of the pharmaceutical houses)!

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MODERN DRUGS IN GENERAL PRACTICE. By Ethel Browning, M.D., Ch.B., Second Edition. The Williams & Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1947. \$4.00.

This book by an English pharmacologist is designed to bring the busy practitioner up to date with a minimum of reading and succeeds unusually well. The opening chapter,

devoted to definitions and generalities, is similar to the first few pages of many other treatises on pharmacology and therapeutics and might well have been omitted from a book of this type, except for one remarkable statement which, if true, is not a generally known truth, namely that there is a "curious liability of sufferers from rheumatic affections to develop one of the most severe effects of sulfonamide toxicity—agranulocytosis."

Chapter II devotes nine pages to penicillin; the discussion is clear and adequate concerning essential chemical properties, mode of action, methods of administration in detail, and clinical indications with dose for each indication. The dose mentioned for subacute streptococcus viridans endocarditis would be considered too small by American cardiologists. An additional two pages gives a bibliography of 42 titles. Chapter III on The Sulfonamides consists of 24 pages; in addition to the general description of pharmacology and uses of the various compounds, there are important statistical comparisons. For example, the statement is made that the mortality from cerebrospinal fever treated with sulfamerazine is 6.7 per cent in contrast to 12.5 per cent for sulfadiazine.

Mortality figures for pneumonia cases treated with sulfonamides are much lower than figures from American hospitals.

Other well written chapters are the ones on digitalis, diuretics, adrenergic and cholinergic drugs, the barbiturates, the local anesthetics and the anthelmintics. Not so informative are the chapters on gold compounds, opium derivatives, gastro-intestinal drugs, local antiseptics and antithyroid substances.

The book is recommended for all practitioners and students of medicine.

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METHODS IN MEDICAL RESEARCH, Volume I, Van R. Potter, Editor-In-Chief. The Year Book Publishers, Inc., Chicago, Ill. 1948. \$8.00.

This fascinating volume presents detailed descriptions and discussions of methods used in medical research in four separate fields. The section on cellular respiration devotes 83 pages to respiration in tissue slices, the homogenate technique, analyses for tissue metabolites and an apparatus for respirometry in small intact animals. This material should appeal to workers in physiology laboratories. Gastroenterologic research methods include those involving cholera, preparation and use of the Mann-Williamson dog (for study of peptic ulcer), and gastric acidity. This section occupies only 20 pages. The assay of antibiotics (65 pages) appears to be adequately explored.

The fourth and largest (188 pages) section deals with the circulation, particularly with measurements of blood flow. Its broad scope includes consideration of recorders of venous drainage and mean flow, pulsatile flow meters, perfusion systems, regional blood flow, collateral circulation, cardiac output and contractility, and analysis of cardiovascular activity. Clinical and pre-clinical investigators will be attracted especially by the material on plethysmography, the roentgen electrokymograph, right heart catheterization, and measurement of renal, hepatic and cerebral blood flow.

Each subdivision is written by an appropriate expert, sometimes subjected to review by another expert, and often commented upon by a third. The volume is rich in detail, even to specifying from what manufacturer a given item may be obtained for the construction of apparatus. A bibliography follows each subdivision, and the entire book is indexed for subject and author.